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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of :
Miskin :
Application No. 10/666,237 :
Filing Date: 18 September, 2003 :
Attorney Docket No.: 3090-5854US

DECISION

This is a decision on the petition filed on 3 April, 2006, requesting withdrawal of the holding of abandonment under 37 C.F.R. §1.181.

For the reasons set forth below, the petition as considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 is **GRANTED**.

BACKGROUND

The record reflects that:

- the Office mailed a Restriction requirement on final action on 15 March, 2005;
- Petitioner filed a reply in the form of an Election on 18 April, 2005;
- the Office indicated on 24 June, 2005, that the reply was insufficient;
- Petitioner filed on 26 July, 2005 (over a 22 July, 2005, certificate of mailing) a reply to the 24 June Notice;

- the Examiner mailed a Notice of Abandonment on 23 March, 2006, citing a failure of Petitioner to file a “proper reply” to the 24 June Notice, however, the Examiner provides no acknowledgement of the 26 July, 2005, reply—an states that “no reply has been received--and/or what is insufficient in that reply—suggesting that the Examiner was unaware of the 26 July, 2005, paper.

It is noted that Petitioner did not enclose with his filing a copy of a date-stamped receipt card—Petitioner should do so in the future, because the File Wrapper Table of Contents does not provide the specificity required in most contexts.

STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).¹

The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority. The language of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) is clear, unambiguous, and without qualification: the delay in tendering the reply to the outstanding Office action, as well as filing the first petition seeking revival, must have been unavoidable for the reply now to be accepted on petition.²

Delays in responding properly raise the question whether delays are unavoidable.³ Where there is a question whether the delay was unavoidable, Petitioners must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unavoidable within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a).⁴

¹ 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:

35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.

Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

² Therefore, by example, an unavoidable delay in the payment of the Filing Fee might occur if a reply is shipped by the US Postal Service, but due to catastrophic accident, the delivery is not made.

³ See: Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53158-59 (October 10, 1997), 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 86-87 (October 21, 1997).

⁴ See: In re Application of G, 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pats. 1989).

And the Petitioner must be diligent in attending to the matter.⁵ Failure to do so does not constitute the care required under Pratt, and so cannot satisfy the test for diligence and due care. (By contrast, unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.⁶))

Allegations as to the Request to
Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment

The courts have determined the construct for properly supporting a petition seeking withdrawal of a holding of abandonment.⁷

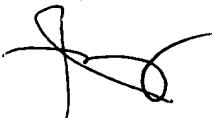
Petitioner appears to have satisfied that construct.

CONCLUSION

Because it appears that Petitioner has satisfied the burdens set forth in Delgar v. Schulyer, the petition as considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 hereby is granted, the 23 March, 2006, Notice of Abandonment is vacated, and the fees are waived and were not charged.

The instant application is released to Technology Center 3600 for further processing in due course.

Telephone inquiries concerning this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3214.



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Office of Petitions

⁵ See: Diligence in Filing Petitions to Revive and Petitions to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment, 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 33 (March 19, 1991). It was and is Petitioner's burden to exercise diligence in seeking either to have the holding of abandonment withdrawn or the application revived. See 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office supra.

⁶ Therefore, by example, an unintentional delay in the reply might occur if the reply and transmittal form are to be prepared for shipment by the US Postal Service, but other pressing matters distract one's attention and the mail is not timely deposited for shipment.

⁷ See: Delgar v. Schulyer, 172 USPQ 513 (D.D.C. 1971).